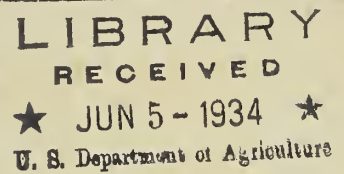


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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Cookery of Many Nations



A radio talk by Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC stations, Thursday, May 24, 1934.

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MR. SALISBURY:

Miss Van Deman, didn't I hear you say something about strawberry shortcake the last time you were over here at the studio? Remember, all of us around here are very good judges, and we'd like to know what your standard is for strawberry shortcake.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Oh Yes, a purely scientific interest. I understand, And I appreciate your offer to cooperate on research on strawberry shortcake.

MR. SALISBURY:

Oh, no trouble at all I assure you, Miss Van Deman.

MISS VAN DEMAN:

How's this for a bargain? If Mr. Beattie will bring the strawberries, I'll see what I can do about the rest.

MR. SALISBURY:

And if Mr. Beattie doesn't bring the berries, I will -- even if I have to drive out to the Government farm and get some of the fine varieties they are developing out there.

Well, what have you for us on your Household Calendar today?

MISS VAN DEMAN:

Well, today I'm out to defend American cooking. And all because of a call I had the other day from a nice young newspaper reporter. He walked into my room with a brisk good morning, and then popped this question at me right out of the box "Say, don't you think American cooking is the worst in the world?" He did smile at the same time, I'll say that for him.

I answered his question in good Yankee fashion by asking him one. I inquired whether he'd ever visited a certain country famed for its boiled mutton, boiled cabbage, boiled potatoes, and boiled custard. He admitted he had and that he hadn't even counted that country in when he asked his question. I soon found that what irks him chiefly about American food is the lack of seasoning. He wants garlic in almost everything except ice cream perhaps, and he wants roquefort cheese crumbled up in his salad dressing (oil and vinegar salad dressing, by the way). And he wants more attention given to spices and flavorings and sensible, tasty garnishes. All of which led us into the food

(Over)

customs and the cookery of other countries, and I suggested he write an article featuring the international idea in cookery. I don't know whether he took up with that idea or not, but I've been thinking a lot about it ever since. I believe we can all be internationalists about food, and we don't need to buy a steamship ticket and cross the ocean to do it either. The people of practically every nation under the sun are making their homes over here with us. Most of us have neighbors or acquaintances who have recipes or food customs handed down from the Old World. From them we can get no end of suggestions for flavorings and combination new to us, especially for low-cost dishes.

There's polenta, for example, the Italian version of cornmeal mush. For the start you make just a good thick cornmeal mush. As you take it from the stove, add shaved-up American cheese and stir until the cheese melts. Then pour the cheese-mush into a pan and keep it in a cold place until it sets so you can cut it up into slices or little squares. Fry these pieces until they're brown and crisp on the outside, and serve them with tomato sauce or catsup or chili sauce. Sometimes Italian cooks leave the cheese out of the mixture and then pass a dish of grated cheese to sprinkle over the fried mush. Whichever way you follow, I'm sure you'll like the combination of fried cornmeal mush, cheese, and tomato, especially if you serve at the same time some quick-cooked spinach or a bowl of mixed salad greens.

Then have you ever served that delicious Scandinavian combination -- cold, plain-cooked salmon (canned salmon would do) with a sauce of grated horseradish mixed with whipped cream? Pepperot saus, or something like that, our Norwegian friends call it; and a very appetizing dish it is for a warm day. Another good one is curried eggs -- which comes to us from India.

And for an emergency dessert, I know of nothing better than those thin Swedish dainty/pancakes, rolled up with jelly or jam inside, dusted with powdered sugar, and served at once all warm and crispy around the edges. The French make something similar and call them crepe suzettes.

As a picnic meat, I notice kabobs described in the camp cookbook of the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts. The idea of kabobs comes from the Near East. They are just little pieces of beef or lamb, with bacon between if you wish, broiled on skewers over a camp fire. Very tasty, and very easy to manage.

Some of the Old World dishes take a long time to make but with our canned and packed supplies we can get the same effect quickly. I know I shocked a Russian lady though by telling her how I made borsch, Russian beet soup, in 15 minutes. "Why it takes a day to make borsch in Russia," she said. Then I told her that I used canned beets, ground them fine in the food chopper, mixed them with canned beef bouillon, and some cooked cabbage I happened to have on hand, and simply heated the soup to boiling. As I served it, I dropped a spoonful of sour cream on the top of each bowl of soup. Sour cream seems to be a part of most Russian dishes but I had no idea how good it was on soup until I tried it.

As I told my newspaper friend, here in America we have a chance to gather up all these food traditions and adapt them to our new science of cooking to conserve food values. It's nobody's fault but our own if we don't build up a reputation for the best-cooked, most appetizing, and well-balanced meals in the world.

Now, to speak of something quite different. Many of you are interested in community canning centers as part of the relief program. The Bureau of Home Economics is preparing a pamphlet to aid in this work, and if you want a copy of "Community canning centers" write to me.

Goodbye for this time.